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Newspaper: Naew Na, pages 1, 6
Date: Friday, November 4, 2005
Headline: "Covert prison rumored to be in Udonthani on 'Voice of America' premises; US just mumbles about secret prison in Thailand"

On November 3, CIA spokeswoman denies Washington Post's report on CIA secretly establishing a covert prison network (Black sites) in 8 countries around the world to detain al-Qaeda suspects, but she didn't give any more comments.

Earlier Washington Post dated 2nd November cited classified White House, CIA, Justice Department and Congress documents which revealed that CIA has held al-Qaeda suspects in secret facilities called "Black Sites" in 8 countries, including Thailand, Afghanistan and several democracies in Eastern Europe as well as a small one in Guantanamo in Cuba after the September 11, 2001, attacks.

Washington Post estimated that CIA has held more than 100 suspects. The paper said that the al-Qaeda major terrorists held in Thailand are Abu Zubaida – al-Qaeda's operations chief and Ramzi Binalshibh – planner of September 11 attacks. Both were held in a secret underground detention facility in Thailand but released after this news was published in June 2003 and Thai officials demanded that CIA close the facility. Since then, the cooperation on counter-terrorism between the two countries has become cold.

U.S. national security adviser Stephen Hadley says that US has to do what is necessary to defend the country against terrorists and to win the war on terror, and that the president has been very clear that they're going to do that in a way that is consistent with US values and that is why he has been very clear that the United States will not torture.

Both Stephen Hadley and White House spokesman Scott McClellan neither acknowledge nor deny the Washington Post's report on CIA establishing covert detention facilities in several countries.

Mr. Kajadpai Burutpat, former National Security Council secretariat, says in an interview with BBC that this news is not confirmed yet because it's still information, not information confirmed as correct. In his experience, he has never seen such information. He believes that the US doesn't open such a facility in Thailand and that Thailand won't allow such a facility to be established here.

Professor Rohan Gunaratna, Singaporean Institute of Defense & Strategic Studies, says that such a covert facility exists, but it is in Afghanistan or the Middle East. It's doubtful that there is a covert terrorist detention facility in Southeast Asia or in Thailand.

Dr. Clive Williams, Australian National University counter-terrorism expert, says that it's unlikely that such a facility will exist in Eastern Europe or Asia because those countries would not allow that. He thinks that such terrorist suspect detention facilities, apart from

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one in Guantanamo, should be on US bases around the world as the US has the rights over said areas, such as Diego Garcia island in the Indian Ocean.

Thaksin says that CIA spokesperson has already denied the report, that's why he said that sometimes when media wanted to present attention-grabbing news, the information is untrue. Therefore, please check for accuracy, or other people will be damaged.

When asked if foreign media are trying to connect Thailand to international terrorism, PM denies that and says we can explain our problems to other countries. The important thing is that media should not hastily publish news without checking.

Mr. Nathee Jitsawang, Correction Department director, says that Thailand has never had a secret prison and as far as he knows the US has never contacted Thailand to set up a detention facility in Thailand. He thinks that the news is not true as it's difficult to set up a covert prison.

Mr. Porapol Adireksarn, TRT Saraburi MP, says as a Senate Foreign Affairs commissioner that the Commission has agreed to set up a sub-committee to study the Washington Post report. Mr. Charoen Kanthawong will be the chairman. The first meeting will be held on November 9.

Mr. Ong-art Klampaiboon, Democratic BKK MMP, says that as a parliament member he has submitted 5 questions to govt: 1. Does this secret prison really exist? 2. Who allowed its establishment? 3. If the govt didn't give permission, is it possible that the CIA itself did it by CIA agents in Thailand? 4. Is this report true: al-Qaeda leaders are held there? 5. Is it true that govt ordered this facility closed in 2003 after the truth was disclosed to the public?

Mr. Sirichoke Sopa, Democratic Songkla MP, says that if the report is groundless, RTG should sue the newspaper.

On the same day, a high-level source from the Govt House comments that the "Black Site" or said detention facility might be in Ban Dung district, Udonthani, on the same premises as Voice of America. The area is over 1,000 rai divided into several zones. The innermost zone is off-limits to all Thais.

Another interesting point is the very high security there. It is said that this area is so special that it cannot be photographed by satellite or sabotaged. This area is also a secret mission training venue for Thai officials. This latter piece of information is well known by Thai intelligence. Thai intelligence has for two years got the information that it is a working place for CIA agents who work in Thailand.

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